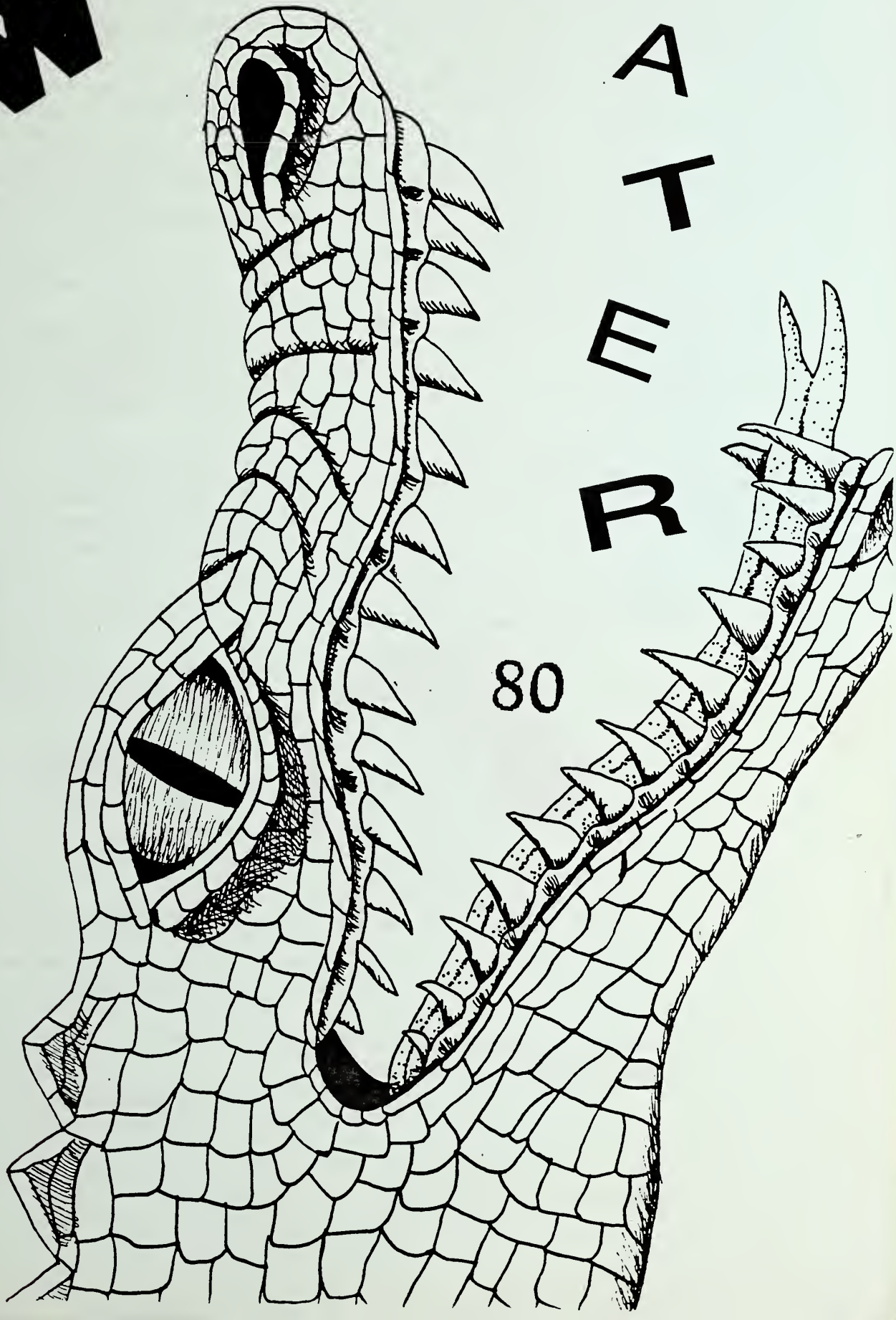
WORD EATER



80

WORDEATER 80 STAFF

Donna Aiello, Christian Bernal, Tricia Concialdi, Jennifer Jay, Jeff Hicks, Dina Procenti, Mark Schillinger, Lena Vigna

In order to get a selection published in this issue, four of the above had to vote for acceptance.
For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

Manuscripts or cover designs for

WORDEATER 81 & 82

must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by:

September 25, 1992
November 20, 1992

Maunuscripts should be typed and will not be returned.

AWARDS

Poetry

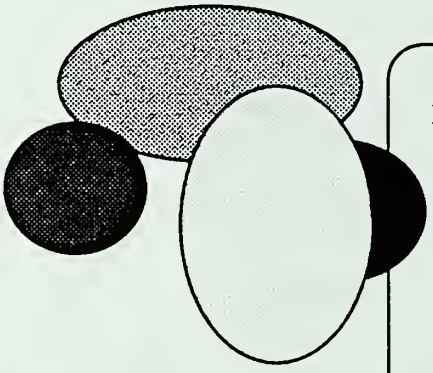
$5 to Christian Bernal
$5 to Jeff Hicks
$5 to Heather Morrissey
$5 to Kevin Olchawa
$5 to Dave Tieman
$5 to Jonathan Wolff

Prose

$5 to Justin Gale
$5 to Amy Guertin
$5 to Derrick Hassert
$5 to Ryan Seeley

Cover Design

$20 to Shellie Smith



Next Deadlines:

September 25, 1992
November 20, 1992

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SUMMER TIME

Diane Drick

Neighbors out washing their cars
Teenagers mowing lawns

Driving with the top down
Eating ice cream cones

Swimming at the beach
Getting sunburned

Cook-outs in the patio
I wish it would never end.

THE ONE I LOVE TO HATE TO LOVE

Kevin Olchawa

The one I love to hate to love
stands staring at me nakedly
smiling
Spiraling images swell in the pit of my stomach
love
hate
passion
rage
desire-
oh, that fire
It hurts my head
Kaleidoscope images mesh and mingle in my mind
When it felt so good-
it felt like hell
When it felt like hell-
it felt so good
My brain,
it knows what to tell
My heart . . .
it has a soul to sell
Ripped in two I falter
Her commanding stare knows-
exactly the string to dangle
My sense is strong-
but my desire is devastating
it stops me from hesitating
For tonight I sleep in Hell-
with the one I love-
to hate-
to love

STARVING ENVIRONMENT

David Tieman

Starving environment
Collapsed.
Dying amongst mirages of twinkle Supermen.
Stuffing anorexia.
Ignoring bulimia.

I TURNED THE CORNER AND SAW IT

Tricia Concialdi

I turned the corner and saw it.
Him.
I could smell the fresh blood.
Red everywhere.
He tried to get up when he noticed me.
Too weak.
I didn't move.
Frozen with a mixture of repulsion and fear.
I wanted to help,
but I just couldn't.
"Please . . . "
He gurgled up at me.
I began to reach out my hand,
and then pulled it back
when I realized he had nothing to grab it with.
He looked up at me
with those two big holes,
pleading with me.
Then he began to convulse
and blood spurted out of his mouth,
and landed on my dress.
He was still.

I turn to leave, maybe to get help
and feel a hand on my shoulder-
I whirl around.
Satan takes my hand
and welcomes me to Hell.

RAIN

Diane Drick

Pattering down my windowpane
Waking me up
Then lulling me back to sleep
with its steady rhythm
Making me want to stay in bed
all morning
And listen to its gentle rhythm.

LIKE FATHER, UNLIKE SON

Justin Gale

"Ta-da," Mark opened the door, and flicked on the light, showing his new lady friend the room. "Come in please, just for a minute. I need to get a couple of things, and then we can go." He extended his hand.

The woman looked at him and smiled,"Sure, Mark, but let's hurry. I don't want to miss the show." She smiled and leaned against the doorway. A spiral of amber hair fell along her slender face. Raising the glass she had kept from downstairs, she said, "I think I need a refill."

"Don't worry. I have some in the room." Mark assisted her into his room, and closed the door.

"Wow," said the woman as she looked around, "it's kind of big for one person."

"Yes, it's a deluxe. There was a mix-up with my reservations; so I get the extra space for free." Mark stared at the perfect figure in front of him. The back of her short skirt revealed long, smooth legs, wrapped in cream colored hosiery.

"Mark?" said the woman as she turned around.

"Yes, Star," he replied politely.

"I think I'll use the bathroom while you get whateer you're getting."

"No problem. Remember though, don't take too long."

"Ok." Star giggled as she set her glass down on the dresser and made her way into the bathroom.

Mark took a deep breath to calm his nerves and moved to the mirror over the dresser. He straightened his tie and retucked his button down shirt. Leaning closer, he covered his face with his warm, sweaty hands, and breathed deep once more. He looked at his face and considered how handsome he was compared to other men. He saw a man with a square jaw, an oversized nose, and dark, curly hair all thanks to Italian heritage.

He touched his face, feeling all that made him different and unique, all the while staring into his large, dark eyes. He brushed across his right cheek and stopped, fingering the jagged ridge, the soft, pink skin that forever marred his complexion. Trembling, he thought of the bastard that marked him, his father.

Out of the corner of Mark's eye, something moved in the mirror. His deep thoughts vanished while his head swung right to spot the intruder. He slapped Star's drinking glass to the floor, spilling the partially melted ice but not breaking the glass. A distant laughter filtered around the room, yet Mark saw nothing.

The bathroom door opened and Star stepped out. She regarded Mark strangely. "What's wrong?"

Mark saw the beautiful woman and instantly calmed down. "I . . a . . a . .knocked over your glass, that's all." He smiled and bent over. Picking it up, he placed it back on the dresser.

"Oh," she sighed, "that's fine I think I've had too much to drink anyway." She slumped down on the edge of the bed.

"No, no," said Mark, completely regaining his composure. "I have a complimentary bottle of champagne in the fridge that needs drinking. Come on, the night is still young." Mark flew off to the kitchen, grabbed the bottle and two glasses.

Upon returning, Mark found Star lying down on the bed. Her arms were sprawled out, and she was only slightly conscious.

"Star, what's wrong?" Mark said, faintly grinning.

"I think I had too much too drink." Star's voice was slow and slurred. "I don't think we can go to the show."

"That's ok, Star." Mark poured a drink, and shot it down. "I saw it already." He poured another, and set the other glass and bottle on the dresser. Then, he moved towards Star, putting his arms around her, smelling her wonderful perfume, centering her on the bed. To Mark, she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her smile, scent, skin, hair, figure, everything was perfect. He wanted her. He loved her, and he wanted her to love him.

"Star, do you love me?" Mark began to undo his belt with one hand, while carressing her thigh with the other hand.

"No." She reacted to his touching trying to resist.

Mark grabbed her arm and pinned it under her knee. He could not understand why he needed her,but he had to have her. He ripped her blouse open, acting as if it were instinct that drove him. He opened the clasp of her bra, feeling her soft, white breasts, and pink nipples. He smothered her with kisses, while chanting, "Love me, love me, love me."

She was barely resisting, completely vulnerable. He pulled her pantyhose completely off. He rubbed them in his hands. They felt so soft and smelled so sweet. He wrapped them around his hand and brushed it against his face. Through them he could not feel his scar.

Mark looked at the helpless woman on the bed and anger in his mind vanished. He felt sorry for the woman. In his childhood and in his nightmares, he was on her side among the weak and helpless. In Mark's eyes she changed. Her legs were not slender and were lined with veins. Her figure was wider and shorter than he had once imagined. She was less beautiful yet more human. Mark realized what he was doing, and what he would have done.

"Oh God, I'm sorry."

Laughter again erupted, this time louder, more sinister, and directly behind him. The lights flicked off as Mark whirled around. He could see a dark figure near the entry.

"Who are you?" snapped Mark. The figure stopped laughing. He could hear it breathing.

"You were doing so well, Mark." The voice was deep and slow, sending chills down Mark's back. "Don't stop now. You're about to hit a home run."

(continued)

LIKE FATHER, UNLIKE SON (continued)

"Who are you?" Mark thought he recognized the voice of the figure, but it was impossible. The voice had died twenty years ago.

"You know damn well who I am." The figure smiled as his remaining teeth gleamed in the dull moonlight. "Now go on and get back to your fun like a good little boy. And remember, I always watch you." The figure turned to leave.

"No, father." Mark stood defiantly. He realized his father was the cause of the pain, and he wanted to be least like him.

"What?" The figure stopped.

"I will not rape this woman. I'm not like you."

"What? And I thought I raised a man." The figure's voice was angry. "I'll finish her then. Step aside, boy." The figure walked towards his son, still just a black shadow. Mark stood his ground,. "Move away, boy, or I'll have to play with you like I did in the good ol' days."

Nightmares resurfaced in Mark's memory. He remembered abuse, hate, and most of all, molestation. He stepped away to let his father pass. Then the insane laughter came from the shadow again. Mark clutched his head,and felt the scar.

"No!" Mark cried out, grabbing the bottle on the dresser, and slamming it down on his father's head. The bottle exploded into thousands of shards. The figure reeled back in pain, and fell to the floor. The bastard voice slowly died away.

Mark's vision spun as and he fell to the floor completely stunned. His head throbbed with immense pain as if he had been struck with a hammer. Mark felt the bottle neck, still clasped in his hand. He felt his head and brushed out shards of glass.

Finally, he was rid of the evil inside of him. His life would be his to control.

Mark shook his head, and regained vision. Star stood over him, pointing a pistol to his head.

Her hand was shaking as she said, "You raped me, didn't you?"

"No!" Mark raised up. "Pleas . . ."

The gun exploded as Mark's vision turned red, then black. In the distance, a deep voice sang,

"Star light, Star bright,
make my son the victim tonight."

REPRIEVE

Dimitra Barnard

Your touch is softer than the breeze that rustles the leaves and blows gently through my hair. It caresses my heart and sheds light into the shadows where my fears lived, drawing out the tears, ever so tenderly, releasing them without allowing them to threaten me. Silently I weep, secure in the knowledge that you will allow no harm to come to my soul. Gentle release, a momentary reprieve from hidden despair. Safe in the hollow of your arms, sheltered by your simple love.

LATE FOR CLASS

Christian Bernal

Fleshy feely
highlights cast in the murky water
muddy kisses
she's barefoot
in my shadow
life comes out
with a smile

Black fishes
sleek cichlids
leaving
her
sleeping

ETERNITY

Kevin Olchawa

The sun shone brightly on the barren cloud
I stood up gingerly to look around

A bird flew by and said "Good Morning"
Shaking my head I whispered I'm learning

I spent the day molding the cloud like clay
The night came and took my innocence away

A bat flew down and perched on my shoulder
It said, "Someday you may be bolder"

With that I took a giant running leap
For my soul I thought I would always keep

I stood up gingerly to look around
The sun only shone brightly on a barren cloud

TRACY'S FAVORITE MARTYR

Steev Custer

Down the hall and to my right, there's a door,
but it doesn't open.
The walls are lined with horror picture windows
which are made from shatter-proof glass.
Search the tiles on the floor forever, trap doors
are never to be found.
And the ladder on the left wall leads to a dime-
sized hole on the ceiling. But I can only squeeze
half-way through.
And just when I thought I was trapped, I notice walls
made of paper; and I think I have . . .
Yes, I do, an HB lead pencil.
So I go to work, scritching and scratching lines
and lines of late night pain until finally
there's a gap large enough to squeeze myself
through.
And I notice down the hall, and to my right,
there's a door, but it doesn't open.

THINK UPON THIS

Derrick Hassert

The gains of hypocrisy
Are few,
But the blessings
Of ignorance,
And the bliss
Of lies . . .
Are eternal.
Ponder, I pray,
Cryptic as I may be.

I WROTE MY WORDS

Steev Custer

I wrote my words, and I shaded my words with a jet black leaded pencil. I knew if no one read them, no one could hate them, and so there were no more.

SPIRIT SHAKE

Christian Bernal

Spirit shake
inhaling the afternoon
alive outsides flutter and mince
wasps in the black blinds

mischevious noises
steamed up from the morning dew
music at a far gazebo
floating massages sent in divine sound
rest on my chest

and I wish we were together

LET ME UNDRESS YOU

Laura Offrink

Let me undress you
with my eyes
and my hands
with my teeth
and my tongue
Let me get pleasure
from the many facets
of your imagination
And give it back
with my many
erotic ideas of old
Let them encase you
in constant orgasm
While I help you
relive your wildest fantasies

I STAND

Janine Passehl

i stand
alone
kept company by
solitude.
naively fleeing
a desire
unanswered
by you.

LEMON

Jeff Hicks

Oh oval lemon
Not perfectly round
Swinging on a branch
Not making a sound

I reach up and pull you
You're bumpy and smooth
All warmed by the sun
You're flavor to soothe

I bring you in the house
To make some lemonade
To drain out your juices
From the slice of my blade

I put you on the table
And go and get my blade
But you roll off the table
And hide as in a raid

Oh little lemon
Where did you go?
Are you hiding under the couch?
Or cowering behind the stove?

I look around to find you.
But only time will tell
For when you start rotting
I'll find you by your smell.

SHE

Donica Rampa

In the mirror
is the image of a woman
who is strong
and unbreakable.
A tough-minded individual
who confronts the world
to dissect and learn it-
Life is her want.

Behind the image of a girl
-a mere child-
who waits for the world
to unfold before her eyes
she is fragile and innocent
Love is her want.

OH, SO STRANGE. OH, SO CLEAR

Ryan Seeley

Oh fretted harmonica, don't sing so blue
Just shut up
Oh fiendish harp, don't sing so silently
Just leave

With gentle, lilting melodies entwined in wraths of harsh voices
Swing swiftly between the bars
And slip into forever
Forever a canticle of caress

I slide my body next to yours
I writhe and pitch unable to twitch
My nose, and bring magic to the song of our love

With hollow lungs that sing no more
I still must praise you, though you leave me alone

While you (voicelessly morose) sing to her
Of her, with her, about her
And let me lie in my grave

"Wait for me!" you chime to me
Like an evil xylophone
(You beat me on the head in jest?)

"Wait for you?" say I
As I begin to cry
All the sad songs away

But I wait
And I sing to myself
Of love, of hate, of wanting you; my mate
And still your duet is with her

My God (ha-ha)
I think of our duet
Me so strong, for you I long
And the tune vanishes away

HUNTER OF LAVENDER

David Tieman

Hunter of lavender
Pierce the flesh
Of colors
Beyond our imagination
Clench your fists
At the repulsion
Of the dying squeal
Smear the hunt
Arrogantly
On your mouth-watering canvas

GANGLAND SUGGESTION

Jonathan Wolff

Delinquent urban art work
repulsive say some
salvation say others
The golden age of style
The American way of death
New etiquette
in old cities
The aspirin wars
Got your gun?

Courtship of stupidity
Eggshell security
Safety last
every man his way
Consuming passions
Failed language development
Night battles.

Useless law
Urban education
Diverted dreams
Wasted deadend term
Old west relived
draw and drop 'em
Good to eat
might as well not waste meat
Urban taste treat.

SHE HELD ME

Kevin Olchawa

She held me
hold me she said
She touched my face
touch me she said
She kissed me
kiss me she said
She lay down
Lie down with me she said
She made love to me
now leave me she said
He will be here soon.

EXCUSELESS

Jameson Turner

You, I pass you every week
I know you know I'd like to speak
But what? What topic could I share?
What bit of knowledge, do I dare
Address you so informally?
What if you're a lot like me?
Bored, and wondering who will be
Your savior from this friendless,
Apathetic mental trap?
But yet again I find myself excuseless
Nothing, everything to say to you
As you walk by

UPPER PENINSULA

Heather Morrissey

Like a lonely wildflower
I wait
In the midst
Of a forest of giant, motionless white bark trees
For the sun
For the spring
To enter my roots and flow
Inside me
Giving me life anf unfolding
My petals
Exposing my true beautiful
Earthly
Existence.

HE'S NOT THE KEEPING KIND

Donica Rampa

I know what love is, little girl
thats why I set him free-
Not because he loves you best
and wants no more of me.

You cannot capture wind
and hold it for your own
a free spirit will wander
until its found a home.

Don't hang on
He'll never stay
You'll only ground his flight
Then one day, you'll turn away
he'll be off into the night.

A stubborn mule
is a stupid fool
You're going to take the fall
Trust me child, I know him well

He's not the keeping kind.

HE WAS

Christian Bernal

He was
free
and bouncy

why not
there was nothing
else
to do

sitting on the vines
watching the animals
behind glass

puzzled
he flew away

TORN SPRING DRESS

Gale Stewart

When Francis opened her eyes, she remembered the hospital. Like all the rooms in the hospital, hers was the same depressing tone of gray. To her, it was a cold and forbidding place. Not well suited for her sickly body. She would much rather spend her final days on her farm, walking among rows of high corn. But after eighty-five years of constant beating, her heart was tired, and her short legs could no longer walk. She was trapped in this gray room in the E ward of the small, community hospital. Alone, with only vague memories of her daughter, Virginia, doomed for a lifetime within similar gray walls.

When Francis's mind was clear, she thought of her child, and how she cared for her who would always be an infant inside. Francis thought that someday Virginia would grow up, and they would talk and love like a perfect mother and daughter. But that was before the two men in the car took her away.

A knock at the door startled Francis, and before she could call to answer, the door opened. She felt a warm surprise when she realized the doctor had come early. She liked the doctor. He was a kind, young man who shed happiness on her dreary disposition.

"Hello, Mrs. Wallen," said the doctor in a cheery voice. "How are you today?" The man picked up a clipboard from the foot of her bed and took out a pen from his white jacket.

"Same, Doc," replied Francis with a half-hearted smile.

The doctor smiled back, and came around the side of the bed to take her blood pressure.

As Francis looked up at the doctor, a memory reopened. "You know, you remind me of someone."

"Who?"

"Patrick."

"Patrick who?"

"Patrick, my son."

"Oh, what's he do for a living? I s he a doctor?

Francis did not answer, but just lay there. The memory had closed. "Are you all right, Mrs. Wallen?" said the doctor.

"Same, Doc," replied Francis, oblivious to their conversation.

The doctor finished the test, and returned to his clipboard. "I t says here that you're scheduled for visitors today."

"Who?"

"It doesn't say." The doctor put his clipboard back down. "Well, I'd better get going. Other patients to see, you know."

"I wouldn't want to hold you up."

"Good day, Mrs. Wallen."

(continued)

Francis watched the doctor exit and the room returned to its dull gray. She thought about him awhile, but could not remember what had transpired. She liked the doctor, though.

During the rest of the morning Francis slept. Later she was checked by nurses, but soon Francis forgot.

She lay looking through the small window. She could only see the sky. Clouds had moved in, and the window looked as if it was not a window at all, but a continuation of the gray walls that surrounded her on all sides.

She closed her eyes and thought of the farm. The gray skies of early spring only accentuated the green of the new, sprouting grass. The hired men were working hard in the field off in the distance, planting seeds of corn and bean She looked at her two gigantic red barns, and thought they needed repainting this summer. The white house, her and Virginia's, also needed retouching. The strong smell of fertilizer in the air was the sign of the beginning of the harvest.

Then the sun came out, and Francis was alive. She turned and saw Virginia, playing in the mud with her new spring dress. It was half torn, revealing her chest. From a distance, Francis saw a woman, an object of beauty that would please any man. But as Francis came closer she saw her lifeless eyes, the alien quality that made her seem unattractive.

The sun went back behind the clouds. "Come on, darling," said Francis as she bent down to pick up her over grown child. She fixed her dress, and the two started back towards the big, white house. Then, Francis noticed a black car pulling into the driveway, and she held Virginia tighter.

The car stopped and the two men stepped out. One was tall and had a crooked smile, the other had a solemn expression and looked at the ground. Both were wearing dark suits. "Mrs. Wallen?" asked the man with the crooked smile.

"Yes?" Francis said hoarsely.

"We've come for Virginia."

Francis held Virginia, bowing her head on her daughter's shoulder. She felt the soft cloth of the spring dress, soaking up Francis's tears.

"Are you all right, Dear?" Francis thought it was Virginia, and shot up. "Careful, Mrs. Wallen. Everything's going to be okay." A large , comforting nurse was sitting by her bedside, softly rubbing her bony shoulder. "It was just a dream."

"Oh," Francis sighed,"I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Good, because you have visitors." The nurse patted Francis, and got up. "They're in the lobby. I'll get them." She smiled and left, leaving the door open.

Down the hall, Francis saw the nurse point in her direction. Immediately behind her were the two men. The ones who took Virginia away. Francis felt the pain in her chest as her heart pumped vigorously. Breaths were short, and she was shaking. As the men came closer she saw the ones crooked smile and the other looked at the tile floor. Francis started to mumble incoherently.

(continued)

The two reached the door, and the one with the smile said,"May we come in, sweet child? We feel your pain."

Francis could barely speak. "No."

"But please, dear. You are past your time."

"No," said Francis more defiantly.

The two men moved aside, and the nice doctor came through. He smiled like he always did, and took off his white jacket. To Francis the doctor seemed younger. Under his jacket he wore a tie-die shirt and dirty, flared jeans.

A memory lit, and burned like a flare in Francis's frail mind. She said, "Patrick, you died in those awful clothes."

"Mother, I went down fighting social injustice in these. I'm proud of them."

Francis smiled. "Same old Patrick, huh."

"Yes mother."

"I don't want to die, Patrick."

"I know, Mom, but the men are right. Your life has passed."

"I want a family again. The farm-"

"Trust me everything will be alright."

"Me trust you, after what you put in your body!"

"Please." Patrick held out his hand.

She did the same, and together they walked through the two men and out of the dull, gray room.

Patrick said, "Virginia is waiting." Somehow Francis knew.

"Did you fix her dress? It was her favorite."

"Yes, Mom. How in the world did you remember that?"

"I don't know," said Francis, holding her son tight. "I remember everything."

The two men, now finished, spread their feathered wings and took the quick way to Heaven.

LOST IN OBLIVION

Laura Offrink

Lost in oblivion
Pushed to the edge
of conciousness
Rocking back and forth
On the final point of no return
Yet pushing back
An affair with the unknown

A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

Jeff Hicks

A symbiotic relationship
Creating a communication upheaval
between two minds
both focused in the same direction
as if it were a mental orchestra
with both of us playing lead parts
and our memories being the background music

POLITICALLY CORRECT

Kevin Olchawa

Waiting day after day
for the prize at the bottom of the cereal box
Hoping-wishing-dreaming
to find my values in a pile of dirty socks
Give me my parole
from this grey prison cell of a town
where people talk of politics
like raw meat is sold by the pound

PLEASURE

Heather Morrissey

wandering down a moonlit path
running down
don't step on the glass
life may be short, pleasure is sweet
don't miss a thing
take my hand
feel my heart beat

STILL TORNADOS

Kevin Olchawa

still tornados
rip the cloths
of faded memories
pleading upon knees
to be brought
to the dawn
of my mind
although I pine
building paper walls
to block the pawns
my forgotten past
Misery's task
bring on the cold fire
divinity's sign

LET'S NOT SPEND THIS DAY

Tricia Concialdi

Let's not spend this day
like every other holiday.
It is the same.
Another holiday to buy things,
to throw our money away on
a fancy dinner,
candy,
cards,
and flowers
And where are the dinner and candy now?
Gone.
The cards are tossed in a pile
in the closet,
and the flowers are dead
Too much money wasted on material things.
So,
tonight we are going to stay home
watch some television,
talk for a while,
and eat tacos.

DISTANT HAMMERS

Jonathan Wolff

Distant hammers
rip echoing gunshots.
Trees, in coincidental salvation
from the fire
Are raised in arches
to be sealed.
Life begins and continues
in the new town.
And in the mountains above
placid paths of water
Meandering into the valley below
grow angry and disgusted.
Water explodes in
tyrannical frenzy
Raping the valley and
quiet dwellers below.

I REMEMBER SO MUCH

Amy Guertin

I remember so much.
Every injustice.
I remember the YMCA
State Gymnastics Meet.
This wasn't just any meet.
This was State!
Eleven years old and I
pulled fourth on vault.
One away from a medal.
I wanted a State medal
so bad.
I think I even cried.
But you weren't there,
were you?
You were the only father
of any girl on the team
that was not there!
I know-
I checked.
But bravely, eleven years old,
I held back tears
and told you,
"No big deal, it's ok."

I often wondered where you were,
that day,
that unconcious turning point
in our relationship.
I tell myself that
I really don't care.
But every so often,
a hint of hurt hovering,
I wonder,
what was more important to you
than me.

TAKE MY HAND

Derrick Hassert

I walk along my wooded path
In the darkness of the midnight hour,
And things that don't exist in the daylight
Hear my steps and walk beside me.
We have no name, but that of night,
As the trees shed their skin
In the chilled October air.
No voice shall call my name,
For I am Solitude.
Only Darkness walks with me,
Through Life, to Death,
And leaves me alone with
Fears and thoughts of both.

ORAL ACUPUNCTURE

Christian Bernal

Sally sat in the chair
Morris was masturbating
above the bird cage
a horse and the spider
fought for sugar
on the virgin lace
of the dining table
nobody noticed the
t.v. was god yet
and Lee came running
from the kitchen
with hot spice pie
pepper burned the ceiling
Mother and Father
were hiding in the bedroom
eating scraps of fat
while their siamese child
squealed in hunger
glinting his nocturnal
eye in the sparse light of his crib
Pam and Al were growing
under the stairs
naughty little touchings
bestilled by man
I had just woke up
the nurse brought me head
David cackled hymns
and sermons of political
disgust and distrust
this morning tea was green

Alice missed me
and Simon never said
so Martin jumped
in the cold park
at night with his
genitals flapping
for all to see
how he ran I can't
retell, but they
missed medication
with their evening
meditation, those
slow seances I
remember as an infant
with wet paint
sneaking through everyone
nostrils and Paul
spilt alcohol under
his soft canvas cot
where the scorpion
always hid because
police beat his son
in a violent kind of fashion

THOUGHTS OF YOU

Janine Passehl

derangement,
twisted images in the
dark corners
of my mind.
lurking creatures
anticipating
my thoughts and
picking them apart.
only thoughts
of you remain.

these are the
sickest
of all

CRIME

Donica Rampa

Little Faith meet Cheery Smile
Hand in Hand they walked
they metamorposed as they spoke
(they changed the more they talked)
Little Faith became Believer
after not so very long
he created Honest Love from
Cheery Smile
As they danced to her
favorite song.
They laughed together
and were happy
Till Reality kicked in their door
Believer was attacked by Fear
Mistrust held Love to the floor.
The incident went
unreported-
And Neither remained the same
Believer left a Coward
And H. Love lost her name

I WOULD DO IT ONCE

Kevin Olchawa

I would do it once
Because I know I'd get away with it
But I wouldn't be able to stop
Once I started it.

THE ROSE BUD

Dimitra Barnard

I am the glistening bud of a rose,
Laden with dew drops, in gentle repose.
I hold a simple glory, mine alone:
How beautiful I shall be when I have grown.

So much promise, so much living yet to do,
I must somehow be patient, await nature's cue.
Until then, I eagerly nurture my potential,
The proper conditions for growth are essential.

The rays of the sun for the warmth of my hue,
Sparkling water for keeping it true,
Fresh soil for the nutrients shaping each petal,
Trust in the process allows peace to settle.

That peace is my patience, a hard thing to hold,
When I quiver with life which longs to unfold!

HOT LIPS

Laura Offrink

Burning hotness
Molds me to you
As my lips become
More yours than my own
But just as our lives
Begin to weld us
Inseperably together
We are torn apart
at the seams

ROCKING CHAIR RHEUMATISM

David Tieman

Rocking chair rheumatism

A pallid pajama perception
Of non-existent nostalgia

A jagged juggernaut
Destroying and demolishing

A violent veteran
Cemented at checkmate

STIFF EMBANKMENTS

Jonathan Wolff

Siff embankments
Carnal smells
Frail finality

Slow

down

"Take me to where
your life occurs,"
she slurs.
Stirring primal,
She's now
And she knows- -
she sees.

Stiff fingers
frozen in fire
Flames of
eternity
Ships of
glass
Steel
death-traps
Manuevering down
the snakes
And night-time
lava flows.
She comes
in this way
then turns
and she goes.

MASK

Heather Morrissey

I am cold, I am dead to your feelings
but you make me this way.
I push you, I force you out of my heart
but you make me strong enough.
In the dark, I long and I cry out for you
but you make me hide it.
In the light I am secure, my soul carefree
but then I see
you.

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

Tricia Concialdi

Blah Blah Blah Blah Blah
The Charlie Brown Teacher.
I already know this.
Concentration is fading
Mind is searching
Give me
a reason
to
stay
awake . . .
AHA!
Abracadabra! You are a
CHICKEN!
That's right, now peck the floor
ruffle your feathers
squawk like a chicken!
Now, Alakazam! You are a
FROG!
There you go, shoot the tongue out
for your dinner
hop around the room
make the girls scream!
And now you are a
DOG! ALLIGATOR! APE! COW!
GODZILLA!!!
Ahhh. Now that's better.

MYSTICAL MONDAY

David Tieman

Mystical Monday
Still riding its weekend stallion
Enchanting the peasants
Of the bored, Dark Ages
When excitement
Was Cheerios and a Coke.

THE HUNTERS

Mike Oesterle

Chapter 1

The bounty hunter stood perfectly still in the doorway, his eyes narrow slits as he stared intently at his newest target, who was seated quietly on a bar stool, looking blankly at the remaining gulp of beer in his near empty mug. The target was facing away from the door so he didn't see the bounty hunter come in, nor did he hear the faint footsteps falling slowly behind him. He was too lost in his own thoughts to even notice his surroundings.

This very afternoon he had stolen some money from Lewis. A lot of money. Enough money, he knew, to cause Lewis to put a contract on his head immediately. If he could just make it through the night he would be on the first plane out of New York in the morning and headed to Seattle. No one would ever think to look there. No problem, he thought, I just have to hide out tonight and then I'll be gone. It's a big city, whoever he hires could never find me before morning, unless . . .

"Why Greg Jaspar, what are the odds of running into you here, at this time of night?" came a soft and all too familiar voice from behind him

"Dirk, " muttered Greg, slowly turning his bar stool around.

"You know, just this morning I was saying to myself, I wonder what Greg's up to. I haven't talked to him in . . ."

"Cut the crap, Dirk. I know why you're here," said Greg. He had turned completely around and was now staring up into Dirk's piercing ice blue eyes.

"You stole some money form Lewis, right?"

"Come on, Lewis told 'ya."

"Just answer the question!" shouted Dirk, raising his voice above little more than a whisper for the first time in the brief conversation.

"All right," replied Dirk, his voice back to its previous soft pitch. "How much?"

"You already know how. . . "

"How much?"

"But. . ."

"How much?"

"Two hundred and fifty thousand."

"All right Greg my man, at least you're being honest. You know what I plan to do, so are you coming quietly or are you going to go in pain?"

"Look, Dirk, I don't want any trouble, you know that. Why don't you come with me?"

"And betray Lewis? He gave me a home when I was down. He did the same for you. He's been good to us. Why did you take that money from him?"

"Think about it , Dirk. I served him for five years and I haven't seen a dime of the money he promised me."

"How much did he promise you?"

"Twenty-five thousand for every hit, just like you. Come on, man, you know that, we used to be partners."

"Yeah, we were," stated Dirk quietly, remembering the hits they did as a team. "But now you betrayed Lewis and he hired me to bring you in alive, and I aim to do so."

"Come on, Dirk, you owe me, remember? I saved your life when we ran into problems at that hit on Richardson's Mansion."

Dirk grimaced as the memories flooded through his mind. It was supposed to be a routine hit on Gary Richardson, a drug dealing millionare who was in serious debt to Lewis and refused to pay it off, even after countless threats of murder. Dirk and Greg had finally been sent to make good on Lewis's threats, but Richardson had anticipated the move and had hired two dozen men to surround his estate.

The two immediately noticed the increased security and took extreme precaution approaching the mansion. A guard stationed at the back kitchen door caught a glimpse of movement out of the side of his right eye and quickly fired a shot from his rifle that caught Dirk in the right side of his chest. The sound of the shot brought all two dozen men to the back of the estate and suddenly all hell broke loose.

Greg acted quickly and grabbed Dirk and as much as dragged him through the bushes they were hiding in into the street behind the estate, somehow managing to climb an eight foot chain-link fence that marked the start of the private property of the estate. Outside of the fence, Greg carried Dirk to their hidden car, helped him in, and drove off, away from danger. All of this was done with bullets whizzing past their heads, two striking Greg, one in the lower back and another grazing the side of his left thigh. None of this slowed Greg down as his new mission had become saving his best friend's life.

Dirk had felt deeply indebted to Greg and pledged that he would pay him back somehow. Over the years, three to be exact, both hitmen had forgotten about Dirk's pledge, until now.

"Dirk, remember?" pressed Greg, breaking Dirk's thoughts,"What do ya say? If it weren't for me, you'd be dead."

Dirk wrestled with the options. Either he went with Greg and betrayed Lewis, which would mean hiding out for virtually a lifetime as Lewis hated being lied to and would not rest until justice was done. However, Dirk's only true possession was his honor, and he had pledged payback to Greg for saving his life.

"All right," he said at last. "I'll go with you. We've got a long road ahead and you know it's not going to be easy."

"No, it's not," said Greg, "but we got a head start. It should take probably twenty-four hours for Lewis to realize that we've disappeared. By then, we'll be in Seattle and already in hiding. By the way, thanks."

"Yeah, sure. We'll stay at my place tonight and go to the airport first thing in the morning. Now, what did you do with the money?"

(continued)

"It's in the trunk of my car. It's all in hundreds and fifties."

"All right. Let's go get it and then ditch your car somewhere."

"How about the garage just around the corner?"

"That should work. One more thing; from this point on, I'm in charge."

"All right, Dirk. You'e the boss."

Greg knew that Dirk was better fit to run the show than he way. That one fouled up hit on Richardson's mansion was the only time that Dirk didn't fulfill his mission. Every other mission that he had been assigned, he fulfilled almost immediately with no difficulties at all. Everyone around him respected him and was a little afraid of him. He was well over six feet tall and built like a rock. His long blonde hair tied back in a pony tail along with his piercing ice-blue colored eyes, gave him a menacing look that few would dare to contend with. But his feriocity in a fight was unparalleled. He had learned how to protect himself by having to grow up in the middle of New York City and constantly fighting for his life. It was especially tough on him, being white in a predominantly black neighborhood.

The main reason Greg agreed with Dirk being in charge was that Dirk was very intelligent. He wasn't well-educated but he was extremely street smart. He knew how to handle himself on the streets and that would help them in hiding from Lewis.

"Well," said Greg, "we better get going. We have to leavce early tomorrow morning."

"Not just yet," said Dirk.

"What?"

"We have witnesses."

Greg had completetly forgotten about the other people in the bar, but Dirk brought them back to his attention. There were three other customers in the bar to Greg's left and the bartender behind the bar. All of them had heard their entire conversation

Quickly, Dirk pulled his sawed-off shotgun out of his trench coat, took aim at the bartender first and fired. The slug entered through the bartender's left eye and exploded out the back of his head in a mixture of blood, brains, hair, and bone. Without hesitation, Dirk pumped the shotgun, turned and shot the nearest customer in the forehead, knocking him off his bar stool. Dirk immediately pumped the gun again and shot the next customer in the side of the head as he tried to run for the door. When Dirk pumped up and tried to fire at the last customer, the gun simply clicked. He had used the three slugs he had left. He threw the gun to the floor and slowly walked toward his last victim, who was crouched down, trembling under a bar stool.

"Please don't kill me!" he cried when he saw Dirk's boot land just inches from his face.

"Get up," said Dirk, grabbing the man by his collar and pulling him out from under the bar stool.

"All right," said the man, quickly getting to his feet. "Please let me go. I won't tell anyone, I swear."

"I know you won't," said Dirk, bringing his right knee up, hitting the man hard in the stomach. The man immediately doubled over in pain and Dirk quickly grabbed his head with both arms and twisted fiercely. The man's neck snapped instantly and Dirk let go, dropping his limp body to the floor.

"You enjoy that don't you." said Greg, staring shortly at each of the four bodies.

"Sure do," said Dirk, picking his shotgun up off the floor. "Now we can go."

Greg got up from his bar stool and walked to the door right behind Dirk. He turned at the door and looked one last time at Dirk's work and mumbled quietly under his breath,"Good thing he likes this so much because he's gonna' have a lot of it to do."

He turned back and walked out the door quickly to carch up with Dirk. The two had to stay even if they were going to survive life on the run. They were pretty even for the time being, but their adventure had only begun.

WITH TEARS

Christian Bernal

With tears
in a stately manner
way
way
back

mother numb
licking lust
amidst the slaughter
of rapid evolution
harem of midnights crown
streets of secrecy
hungry puddles
mirrored by the blue candles

An organ playing
in the pub
summer ale smell
warm burps
with impotent laughter
simply
way
way
back

LEAVE ME BE

Janine Passehl

just leave me be.
i am content now
to be alone with myself
surrounded by
silence
enjoying the freedom
to explore
this destructive
obsession
which has enveloped
my entire
being.
my only solace
in this life--
to be left
alone
with thoughts of
you.

"WHAT ARE YOU STARVING FOR?"

Steev Custer

"What are you starving for?" she asked. I told her, and then she gave me a little taste and refused me any more.
"What are you craving for?" she asked. I then confessed. She gave me an even smaller taste and refused me any more.

And I hurt, like those sentenced to spend terminally ill forevers, forever.
I spin, wondering when it will stop, and I live in mushroom fields of punishment, savoring what little I had before torment.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Laura Offrink

Bridging the gap
Between the waters of age
And the mountains of immaturity
I struggle toward adulthood
Yet continue to wonder
Where teenagerhoood ends
And adulthood begins.

WATERFALL

Jonathan Wolff

A drop endures
on the brink of the abyss
Poised and prismed
in the sun.
A final moment of
reflective calm- -
Flashback to a
visionary cloud
Memories of a
long-ago storm
Existence in
a river
Trapped inside a
lungless creature
finding nothing
more to teach her.
Exhumed among
its friends again
To fly with
the fish- -
Freefall.

SHADOWS

Kevin Olchawa

Walking in the shadows of my mind
I see a light under a locked door
Knowing not to go there
Because of the scraping on the floor

Turning left at the crossroad
I see a tunnel of blue haze
Following closely to the wall
I make my way through the maze

Tripping, I see a faded memory
curled up upon the naked wood
Bending I extend my arm to caress it
but can't touch it if I could

I pass through the tunnnel and slip
in a trickling trailing stream of blood
Rolling Standing Slipping Flopping
I kneel wondering if there will be a flood

Blood smeared across my face
Not knowing which way to ask of grace
What is my fate, will I be saved?
Lost in the shadows I slowly lose my faith

WON MORNING BEYOND EWE

Christain Bernal

It was a stiff day
virgin sands had snowed through the forests
silence ran blissfully
hiding behind a birds choir
when I turned my head
I slinkied up the stairs
of the hidden altar

The sun was pleasing
and the wind slightly welcoming
there I sat, in the flesh
momentarily aroused by the grass
parading mushrooms made me a pillow
I was joined by a caterpillar
and the wolf

We talked of today
before yestersday came
and watched a small show of promiscuous fairies
I choked on my smoke
and they laughed and they teased
I rained just a little
and climbed up a tree

Night showed up
shortly after Dusk left
(It's hard to get those two together)
we began to sing
and I feel a bit tired
so I excused myself
and to reality retired

. . . AND THE POEMS BECAME SONGS TODAY

David Tieman

. . . and the poems became songs today
On the basement stage.
Cutting,
Releasing,
And tormenting
Heavy stares
That break the pandemonium
Of our 3:00 a.m. coffee break
(In which the guitars and amplifiers
Are smashed)
Middle fingers to the alcoholics.

THEY IS FRIENDS

Christian Bernal

They is friends
They is family
They is fools

open
and talkative
her
life story
was
revealed when
we
first met

she
big
and smiley
child-like
They always frowning
smiling
questioning
plotting

They is friends
They is family
They is
weak

AS I LOOK IN YOUR EYES

Laura Offrink

As I look in your eyes
I see warmth
As I touch your lips
I see want
As I rub your chest
I see pleasure
As I unzip your pants
I see lunch

RIDICULED AND SCORNED

Jonathan Wolff

Ridiculed and scorned
by his friends,
He leaves the familiars
of his life behind.
A visionary prophet,
entering the smooth
Black unknown
highway alone.

The elders watch him
through the raven's eye,
Observing and guiding
from the sky.
Leave the highway,
the traveled path,
Enter the cave;
youth has past.

Melting logs etch
ash into the earth
As smoke drifts up
from the fire's berth.
Hot hallucination's
persist,
Curling and weaving
through the mist.

Drink from our cup again
and ignore hollow hope,
As this is where
your life begins.
Do not fear
unshed tears
For you are
the chosen one.
You have been prepared
all these years
And now the West
devours the sun.
A man you
have become.

Listen carefully:
these are your trials
to overcome.
The first is ignorance;
if you fail you
are doomed to stupidity
and misunderstanding.

(continued)

The second is doubt
you must believe
while others call
you mad.
Th third is fear;
this will try to crush you
but you must persevere
and hold close
what you hold dear.

Return now to your
land and your home.
You are enlightened
and enlightened
You shall stand. . .
aware and alone.

YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME

Jeff Hicks

You say you love me
and you express it
I say I love you
and I express it (I think)

You say you care
and you show it
I say I care (I think)

You say you want to spend your life with me
and you mean it
And I respond the same
and I mean it (I think)

But then again I think too much.

RN

Donica Rampa

You were lost and alone,
I found you
And healed you
with salve from my heart
Bandaged you with love
and now
on the way to recovery--
You discharged
yourself, and I
am left
with an empty
First Aid Box

OVERHEARD IN A CORNFIELD

Ann Collett

Rouging and detasseling are two parts of a summer job that most kids abhor. But with the right coworkers and a sense of humor, it can be entertaining. The work itself is brainless- -walk back and forth through a cornfield, first cutting out corn that is the wrong hybrid (rouges) and then following the crews of students who pull tassels from the four female rows.

Basically there were four groups of workers: high school girls, high school studs, the little guys, and everyone else. The high school girls were good workers for the most part. They were good whiners too. It was always too hot, or too dry, or too dusty, too far/too close to lunchtime, too close to quitting time, too early, too late, too cold, and so on. This was only when conversation lagged among them, which thankfully wasn't too often.

Of all the high school girls who complained and worked, Heather was the most fun to listen to. If there wasn't a Heather-ism for the day, it was a let down. Heather was a space cadet. She was tall, very pretty, a basketball player, and honor roll student, and a space cadet. She professed to liking "That one singer with red hair, you know, the really hot looking one" (Rick Astley was the assumption). And was working "So I can paint my Grandma's car. She's going to sell it to me real cheap, but I don't like the color. It's brown right now. What kind is it? It's brown. Chevrolet? It's brown. How many doors does it have? I don't know, it's brown. Hatchback? It's brown. But I don't like it brown. I want to get it painted that one color. It's kind of purple, but not really. You know, its, well, its kind of purple, but not really. Rust? No, that's not it. Magenta, no that's too bright. It's kind of purple, but not really. Maroon! Yeah, kind of like that , but not really. There's another name for that color. Burgundy! Yeah, that's it! Burgundy. You know, it's kind of purple, but not really." That wonderful dialogue with Heather led to the Heather-ism alert, and immortalized Heather forever in the eyes of summer detasselers. The phrase was "kind of, but not really" . It could apply to weather- -kind of cloudy, but not really, kind of sunny, but not really, kind of cold, but not really; time- - kind of late, but not really; and any other place you could think of. Its best usage came in sarcasm, as in when something was definitely one way, and you "kind of , but not really"ed it, for example, after a water fight on the bus, the bus was kind of wet, but not really, as the water streamed out of the front door. The phrase actually outlasted Heather's employment She quit after working only one summer claiming that flipping burgers at McDonald's for a whole summer was easier than walking in a cornfield for the same money for four weeks. Kind of, but not really.

Heather had other contributions in her only summer of detasseling, however. One day we were treated to a description of the "ideal date". Now Heather was a sophmore in high school at the time, and the emphasis is obviously on the cover and not the contents.

"First, he'd have green eyes, long brown hair, a diamond earring, and a leather jacket. He'd pick me up in his convertible and tell my parents we were going to a movie. Then we'd drive to Chicago and go shopping at Water Tower. He'd buy me things and we'd eat at the Hard Rock Cafe and we'd be home by midnight so my parents would never even know." The town in which Heather lives is at least two hours form Water Tower and Hard Rock, kind of an impossible drive, but not really. When questioned as to the details of this date, it was soon apparent that the date had no personality requirements whatsoever. I guess that is one of the perils of being a pretty, popular, high school sophmore. Looks and appearances are the center of reality.

Not far from the realm of Heather was Kenton who was a seventh grader, with roughly more common sense than Heather. His favorite passage of time consisted of singing "There's Kathy who's lived most everywhere, from Zanzibar, to Berkely Square, while Patty's only seen the sights a girl can see from Brooklyn Heights, what a crazy pair. But they're cousins, identical cousins don't you know, they look alike, they walk alike, sometimes they even talk alike, you could lose your mind, 'cause they're cousins, they're two of a kind." This theme song mania, Patty Duke Show in this example, could easily spread to Gilligan's Island, The Brady Bunch, or whatever other Nickelodeon reruns Kenton had watched the night before. This is an entertaining way to pass the time with little or no brain effort.

Kenton also had devised a plan on how to get back at someone you are mad at. There are three stages. The first time they bother you, you can yell back at them. The second time, make a sign that says "Kick Me" and tape it on their back. And then, if they make you really mad, you spray paint "Elvis is Alive!" on their car.

But there are higher levels of intelligence that seek a reprise from detasseling. Recreational thinking, of a sort, games that exercise your brain but let you keep your job in mind. You don't want to drift too far, or you won't get your job done right. John, the master of the 32 ACT, would try to solve all of the world's problems in one afternoon or one cornfield, whichever was smaller. This led to redoing some of his rows, because the attention he paid to his job was minimal.

To divert his mind and exercise our own, we created mind games. The first was a singing game, to put an end to Patty Duke Show theme song. You sing one song until you get to a word that is the beginning of a line to another song. For example: "Here we come , walkin' down the street,

get the funniest looks from

everyone we meet. . ."

"Meet me in St. Louis, Louis. . . "

"Louie, Louie, oh yeah,

I think I love you so. . . "

"Sew, a needle pulling thread,

La, a note to follow sew. . . "

(continued)

"So long, we sure had a good time. . . "
"Time for me to fly. . . "
and so on. If you got stuck, you completed the last song, andstarted over with a new song. This would hopefully lead to a new train of song lines It is harder that it first appears, and works better with more people playing. During good sessions, it got so tht the first one to fill in the line had the line we sang.

The other game was originated by the thinking guru himself, John. One day , out of the blue, he asks, "Have you ever seen an Ethiopian tangerine?" He got some funny looks, but then when he pointed out that he had just used Ethiopia in a sentence, we decided to see how many African and Middle Eastern countries we could use in sentences on normal conversation. Âs a sampling:

You can't run any faster, can ya? **Kenya!**

At every school dance, I can rock and roll all night. **Iraq!**

I was late this morning, so I ran to catch up. **Iran!**

Hey, that cashier's wrong! He gypped me 30 cents. **Egypt!**

What did you have for breakfast?" OJ and cereal. **Syria!**

If you were in the Mediterranean, you would have, to the north, Europe, and to the south, Africa. **South Africa!**

There was this Tennessee mountain family who had a huge tree in their yard. One summer it blew over in a storm. They had to get rid of the stump. They tried chopping, sawing, digging, burning, but it wouldn't budge. Finally one of their cousins suggested using the mule to pull while the men pushed from the other side. They thought about it and the Pa said, "Well, we have tried everything else, let's all try it Jimbo's way." **Zimbabwe!**

Is that artificial whipping cream" No, ma'am. It's real as can be. **Israel!**

Mom, can I take your car? I know that car is hers, but I'm mad at Dad's car. **Madagascar!**

Do you remember our old babysitter? Her name was , um, Libby! Libby what? Libby, um, Libby ah, Libby er, Libby Jelik! **Libya!**

Mmmm, I'll always love ice cream. **Malawi!**

And so on. Mr. Foster, the boss, was amazed by this game. He's a high school history teacher who leads rouging and detasseling crews over the summer. He couldn't believe that students would actually want to think and pursue knowledge over the summer like that. He was impressed, and actually contributed Zimbabwe to the African counry hunt.

Mr. Foster himself was another source of quotations and amusement. His mother-in-law baby sat for his children during the day, and they would ride down with the crew and then get dropped off at their Grandma's house. One day there was a difference in opinion with his mother-in-law regarding the children. When he finally reappeared in the field, he said to the boys, "When you find that wonderful girl you want to marry, before you even ask her, make sure her mother id dead!" This is apparently the best way to avoid differences in opinion. He even tried to contribute a thinking game to our repetoire. One day, John was moving raher slowly, and looking confused. Mr. Foster told him, "John, let's get moving there. You know what to do, don't you, or did you just fall off the potato truck? No, how 'bout, just fell off the turnip truck? Do you like it? Just fell off the turnip truck. I just made that up." From there, it progressed. "C'mon guys, let's get the show on the road. Hey! The show on the road. Do you like it? I just made that up."

"Wait, wait, let the kids get going first. Don't put the cart before the horse. Hey- -the cart before the horse. Do you like it? I just made that up."

So these are snippets of conversations and thoughts you can overhear in a cornfield. It is an experience you can learn from, or not. You can exercise your mind, or let it get stagnant and stale. Heather and her friends didn't return the next year, and told all of their friends not to apply for the job. It was too hard for them apparently. Heather quit cross country and became a football cheerleader the next fall. In the detasseling circles, the decision was attributed to brain atrophy.

Kenton came back, and even tried rouging the next summer. It is faster walking, though, and more of it, and Kenton didn't last the whole time He did make an encore appearance in the detasseling crews, however. Being a freshaman had somehow affected him, though, and he spent more time trying to impress Jennifer than singing Patty Duke's theme song. From that aspect, the change wasn't all bad.

Mr. Forster is still detasseling, and teaching history. He detassels to make extra money for himself over the summer, and creates jobs for a number of high school and junior high school students in the area. He still has a mother-in-law, too.

There will always be the Heathers and the Kentons to create the workers in a detasseling crew. They come and go. But the thinkers, those who dare to be different and challenge themselves, they might not return.

The thinking group, (John, Karl, Jane and Ann), have gone their separate ways, although they still get together from time to time and pull out the encyclopedias from time to time to practice. John applies his talents to the physics and computer departments at North Park College, and is hoping to intern at U of Va. next summer, so he won't be eating any Ethiopian tangerines. Jane is practicing on her kindergarten students and her frosh-soph girls basketball team, who understand a little better. She might be back to continue the tradition. Karl will graduate from high school this year and return to be the number one sidekick for Mr. Forster. And Ann, well, I still play those same thinking games, but somehow they just don't have the same effect as they did that summer in the cornfield.

(continued)

COOL OFF

David Tieman

Into the blood
One must dive
Treading the waters of suicide
Swimming blind
Amongst the H.I.V.
Pinch your nose,
Exhale everything,
And sink to the bottom
Of the unsupervised pool
Thick with disease.

I'VE SEEN HER MOAN

Christain Bernal

She's the skin of a corpse
and a pale mane
silent are her lips (yet)
and i expect vapor when she speaks

I've met her eyes
icing by
I watch for them in the corridor
on my early days

But it's only a dream
a day dream at most
a quick vision of ecstasy
one in a thousand

TAKE

Kevin Olchawa

Remember that moon-lit night
walking in the grass
looking toward the sky
you were so sad
you told me all your problems
lying side by side

Remember that Saturday afternoon
we lay on my bed and listened to tunes
we were so happy so innocently
pretending to fall in and out of sleep

Remember the times I've made you smile
you and your mom or boyfriend had a fight
i just talked and made you forget
you told me i always made you feel better

Rememeber those times when i'm far away
I need to find someone to help me escape

I WAIT WITH HOPE

Tricia Concialdi

I wait with hope.
I pray with patience.
I sob with sorrow.

The lonely river grows quieter still.
There is no gentle sun of yesterday.
There are no children playing, no laughing, no smiles.
No hum of cars whizzing by the cities.

I am angry
at him
at her
and them
and you

and me.

There is no world,
and it is my fault.

AS I LOOK AROUND

Laura Offrink

As I look around
At my well-known world
It seems very different-
That precious sunset
That favorite tree
The road I travel
Each day to school
They're becoming strangers.
Road, sunset, tree
I have seen all my life
Beckoned me onward
Morning, noon, night
But as months pass of late
A traveler I've become
Now I am
The unwelcomed one

SPEAK WITHOUT A THOUGHT TO

Jonathan Wolff

Speak without a thought to
Hear without a mind to
Listen without a plan to
Make it if you can.

MELVIN'S EYELIDS

Steev Custer

Melvin's eyelids had become cinder blocks on his face. It was all he could do to keep them up. He hadn't slept in days. His course load at the Junior College had become too much. Math, English 102, Speech, History, Astronomy and Philosopohy each played their parts in depriving him of sleep.
He rushed himself to the men's room between classes. The thought of sitting on the throne with no one to call his attention overwhelmed him. As he lowered his trousers and eased himself on the seat, he noticed the abundant markings on the walls of the stall. To his right, a cartoon of Barney Rubble holding an electric guitar was drawn in magic marker. "Tom Janek is Jimi Hendrix reborn" was inscribed below. On the back of the door, "Chris 'Shaggy' Fordonski was here" was engraved in the flaking brown decrepit paint.
"Steev loves Tracy forever and always" was declared just above the paper rack in what appeared to be purple sharpie marker.
Melvin instantly developed insomnia. The sight of these feeble-minded attempts at humor and declarations of respect infuriated him. The basic thought of anyone defacing a poor, defenseless toilet-stall wall allowed him to do something he had never permitted himself to do. He tapped into his God-given supernatural powers and became. . . "The Washroom Warrior"! In an instant he was clad in the washroom nurtured Superhero on the nineties. With a toilet-paper roll dispenser suit of armor, and the ability to hurl atomic Charmin rolls at unsuspecting vandals, the Washroom Warrior was prepared to meet and defeat any villian. None too soon did his opportunity arise. From the next stall, the aroma and obnoxious squeak of permanent marker invaded his senses. The Washoom Warrior dramatically burst from his Stall Headquarters and blasted through the door of the neighboring bowel-movement sanctuary.
But, for the first time in Melvin's Washroom Warrior career, he underestimated the enemy. This time the offender wasn't just some annoying frat boy. This time it was HIM. . . "Graffiti Man". And before our hero could unleash his atomic toilet paper rolls, he was launched backwards by Graffiti Man's permanent marker laser gun.
He felt himself being propelled backwards until finally, he felt a mighty thud.
Melvin raised his head to realize he had fallen asleep on the john again. And to make matters worse, he was 15 minutes late for Speech. He hiked up his drawers, gathered his books, and before leaving, inscribed his own words of wisdom on the bathroom wall:

"Beware of the Washroom Warrior."

FAR AWAY FRIEND

Dimitra Barnard

When I think of the love you give to me,
So simple, undying and true,
My fears run and hide, I know I'm free,
I want to be closer to you.

I've come to trust, I miss you so much.
I know the miles can't keep us apart.
I need to hear your voice and feel your touch
Though I know we're heart to heart

I feel you out there listening,
Dear friend, you must know it's true
Even when my tears are glistening,
I know I can depend on you.

IMPLANT DRESSING

Christian Bernal

If today were forever
I'd be with you
If time was aligned
I'd stay

get lost with me in the garden
expose your dreams
perhaps we could kiss
let's die
my
lying
sky

cry

BITTEN BY THE SNAKE

David Tieman

Bitten by the snake
Of a self-centered mate
Deadly,
Poisonous,
And without mistake.

Banished by the king
In my surrogate dream
A witch-like zephyr
Wandering,
Slithering,
Following. . .

BLOWING HARDER AND HARDER

Laura Offrink

Blowing harder and harder
The wind slices into my face
Leaving it brittle and aged
Making me seem older
than I am
And yet preparing me
for my unavoidable future.

MY LEG

Amy Guertin

My leg.
No, you can't have it!
It's mine!
My hair.
You're taking that, aren't you?
In clumps.
They warned me,
they told me this would happen.
I never thought. . .
I never believed. . .
God, why me?
Treatments.
My head is spinning.
My stomach. . . Oh, God!
The pain.
The torture.
Oh, God, why me?
Take my leg,
take my hair,
ravage my body.
But, damn you,
you. . . will. . . not. . . take. . . my. . . life!
I will live.
I will.
Cancer.

SWEET LUTE

David Tieman

Sweet lute
Serenade me,
Tear out the nails
Of a crucified reality,
And sing with the lizards
Of Egyptian melodies
Eloquently

JUST FOR YOU, MY SWEET

Derrick Hassert

He descened the stairecase like a dancer, each foot barely touching the steps below him. He whistled to himself as best he could, for it was common knowledge that his lips could hardly make enough noise to register to the human ear as a whistle, but it was music to him all the same. The spirit within the body was on a psychological high, induced by some logic that the man was sure no other would want to comprehend.

The small and slender form of the young man entered the darkness of the dining room below, a darkness almost so severe that it missed matching the color of his suit by half a shade. In this absence of light a touch of pallor met with an identical dot of white and struck a match, revealing a face atop the ebony clad figure. The face smiled while a hand below lit a candle on the table. He moved quickly to the kitchen.

The phone; the number; an answer; she was home.

"Hello?" Click. All the information he needed was had. The smile continued as if it would not stop until the face it slashed was split in two.

Thin fingers reached to an opposite wrist to check the time on a watch that had been broken for almost a year. The smile continued. "Right on schedule."

The hand that came from the wrist with the watch pored the smile some wine; the lips tasted and parted to show small white teeth to the darkness.

"Lovely."

The watch again was consulted for its faulty diagnosis.

"Depart, we shall Depart, we must"

The thin figure danced its way to a refigerator, opening its door with a graceful movement of one arm. Milk, bread, cheese, pie, eggs- - these were not the things he sought.

"Ahhh." A dozen black roses, preserved by the cold in a proper state of decay.

"Lovely."

The roses were swept up by slender fingers and placed with care beneath a waiting arm, while the other arm reached up to correct a crooked tie. When the correcting arm was free it proceeded to check one more item; it moved slowly to the left breast pocket inside the jacket, where the syringe rested. A tool waiting for a task, it still rested as such. The lips widened and blew out the candle on the table, while the smile continued to cut across the pale oval that was the young man's head.

"Are we ready?" asked a melodious voice of the darkness. The darkness did not respond. "Good! Then we shall go!"

The lips parted once again to whistle, and this time they proved to be successful in their task. An old piece of classical music came forth from within the thin form, something from Gounod. A march: a funeral march, for dancers made of wood, controlled by string. The funeral march of a marionette.

PAIN

Janine Passehl

this pain
in my heart
once
so sharp and
hurtful
has faded into
nothingness.
i've begun to
doubt
that i ever
cared.
what i wouldn't
give
for the
pain
to return
for then at least
i would
feel
alive.

LET'S BUILD SOMETHING

Jonathan Wolff

Let's build something- -
Let's see how sharp and
precise corners can be
Perfection achieved
Let's now make three.
One up and
Two up and
Three up.
Now we are gods
of creation.
Out of dirt we have
born a nation.

SADNESS

Kevin Olchawa

It covers
as a storm gathers
It swells
like a well of rats

gnawing

It rapes my soul
licking my brain
feeling so cold
laughing aloud

taunting

It looks in my eyes
you begged for it
It cries
you never learn

bleeding

I crumple to the floor
ripping at my ears
inviting the roars
with bloody tears

I AM NOT A DEMANDING PERSON

Tricia Concialdi

I am not a demanding person
Shut up and listen!
I don't ask too much of people.
I don't care how busy you are!
I do so much for people
Get it yourself!
I am supportive
You're on your own!
I am respectful
What's this in your drawer?!
I am sensitive
Lose some weight!
and I am not selfish.
I come first!
So please, because I love you
I can't stand you!
Do this one little favor
Add it to the list!
and stay home tonight with me.
Get out of my house!

A GHOST STORY

Kevin Olchawa

Some people will never believe. So maybe I heard it from a friend of a friend. But listening to his story gave me the chills. Maybe I should correct myself; it really was not a story. It did not really have a plot or theme or even an ending. How can something you cannot explain come in a neat little package with a red bow on top? Anyway, just sit back. . . oh, watch your back. . . and see what happens.

Jason was late for school and he still had to pick up his girlfriend on the way. Running out the door hw grabbed his bag and keys and yelled bye to his mother.

Jason was mad as he glanced at his watch. If he was late to school again he was going to get detentions.

Jason pulled into his girlfriend's driveway at 8:18 according to the clock on his dashboard. He had a ten minute drive to school plus he needed to go to his locker before his first class which started at 8:30. Needless to say, he was pressed for time. As he slammed both palms on the horn he wondered why she was always late, especially when he was in a hurry.

Impatiently tapping on the steering wheel, Jason glanced to his left. About two blocks down the road he saw an extraordinary tall man in a black suit wearing a top hat walking slowly toward him. Since he was in such a hurry, Jason was not really paying attention and the sight did not register until he was already looking toward the house.

Confused, Jason looked quickly back to his left, but he did not see the man. It was a little foggy so the thought he could have imagined the man After all, it could have been somebody out to get the newspaper.

Jason glanced at the clock on the dash. It read 8:19. He screamed in frustration and threw his head back sighing loudly. As he lifted his head he glanced in his rear view mirror In the saw a strangely tall man in a black suit wearing a top hat walking slowly past his car. Every hair on Jason's body stood straight up. Curling his toes tight and squeezing his eyes shut he thought that there was no possible way the man could have been two blocks down the road one second, then right behind him the next second.

Opening his eyes, Jason looked in his rear view mirror. Nothing. Slowly he relaxed.

The front door finally opened and Jason's girlfriend bounded out to the car. He glanced at the clock again. It still read 8:19. As his girlfriend grabbed the door handle Jason looked at her. Past her, about two blocks down the road Jason saw a tall man in a black suit wearing a top hat walking slowly down the road.

Jason's girlfriend asked him what was wrong. "You look like you'vejust seen a ghost," she said.

SLEEP NOW

Christian Bernal

Sleep now
my close one
close as you can be
stay close
not far now
not distant
or
estranged
keep near
or warm
it feels just the same

Stay close
now darling
feel leather
bitch
Scream across a foreign earth

scuttle around
now child
be proud

THE COVERS ENFOLD ME

Laura Offrink

The covers enfold me
In their mauvish warmth
I begin snuggling down
        with Pooh Bear
As I absorb the comfort
        my blankets supply
Together Pooh and I
Review all that has happened today
While we begin our silent walk
        into sleep

UNINSPIRED

Steev Custer

Uninspired by truly uninspiring words, I wrote nothing and it was the best thing I never wrote.

AS I DRANK WITH THE ALBATROSS

Jeff Hicks

As I drank with the albatross
And danced with the wind
I spied a leaf dragon
All brown and sharp finned

He joined in our dance
As we spun him round 'n round
Moving up from Rio
All the way to Puget Sound

But the wind disappeared
And took along the dragon
The albatross took his drinks
And left his empty flagon

So I sat upon the beach
On the coast of Puget Sound
The waves slapped up upon my toes
And no one was around

But then the waves spoke to me
And told me "Hey come swim!"
So I ran along the waterfront
And finally I jumped in

"Come in and swim and frolic and play"
The water said to me
"Follow the current, the ebb and flow
Out to the open sea"

So away I swam and felt a change
My body began to squish
My arms pulled in, I sprouted gills
I was turning into a fish!

Now swimming with my pointed tail
My red gills and my scales
I was swimming ever deeper
And looking for the whales

I quickly heard their singing
And asked if I could go
Join in their ceaseless melody
That rises from below

They said "Yes, please join us do
But do not dive too deep
For if we do we cannot breathe
And would begin an endless sleep"

(continued)

I quickly joined their chorus
But then I dove too deep
And began to understand
Their neverending sleep

"Run back to the land"
The nautilus did say
So I spun around, and reached up
To the beach now where I lay

I shuddered and I twisted
And opened my eyes to light
All curled up in my childhood bed
Oh my goodness what a night!

TRANSFUSION

Heather Morrissey

Sunlight and shadows on the
wall of the room
fear of the unknown, fear of the known
smell of incense, patchouli, and wine
red wine, so red
like the blood dripping
from your neck onto my lips
to become one, each into the other
one body, one blood
relent, commit, transmit
hot waves of molten passion
burning, rushing up so fast
fast to capture you, to trap your soul
taking you into the realm of fear
the realm of utter, complete beauty
into the sunlight and shadows on the
wall of the room

INSPIRATION

Jonathan Wolff

A vast web
of interlocking words
Traces back
through centuries.
Hereditary madness
scurries and weaves
Through conciousness
seeking a new mind:
Patiently waiting to explode
once again with success.

MODERN GAZE BLAZING

David Tieman

Modern gaze blazing.
Promiscuous, sumptous intelligence
Luring, seducing.

Horny prehistoric idiocy
Clubbing the head
Of curiosity.
Pulling the hair
Of creativity.

SOMEONE, PLEASE, LISTEN

Amy Guertin

What am I to do?
Someone, please, help me.
But no one listens, no one cares
or they just choose not to see.

My soul is tearing apart,
the pain I cannot bear.
As I hold the knife above ny heart,
I know my end is near.

But I hesitate for just a moment
to see anyone care.
No one steps forward to stop me
as my heart begins to tear.

I wonder why people can't even see
what's right before their eyes.
They never knew, they never saw
until the last good-byes.

Maybe now they'll listen
to a message so very clear,
written in blood shed by my hands
for the world to hear.

I STAND WITH MY TOES IN THE SAND

Tricia Concialdi

I stand with my toes in the sand,
letting the wind gently flow
through my nakedness.
I feel the sun gazing upon me
and warming my every pore.
A cool wave splashes upon me
and soothes my body
sending a gentle chill
throughout me.
I open myself
toward the heavens
and rise.
a symphony of clouds
surrounds me,
enveloping and
massaging my soul.
I am playfully tumulted
through the sky
until the great west wind
holds me up to the world
and the heavens cry out
in thunderous splendor.

I am slowly
descending to
myself.
Gently and carefully
being carried down.
I rest on the sand,
held by the arms of the earth.

MOTHER OF ALL

Christian Bernal

Daughter of the sacred gates
Sister of the serpent song
The princess of reptilian silk
Heiress of the morbid illusion
Queen of the slow evolution
Succubus of the carnal night
Crimson siren of the black sea
Goddess of the wicked procreation
Seductress of the tempting wind
Whore of the innocent religion

PU EMIT DNOCES

Christian Bernal

Her majestic majesty
dined daintily
today
on edible erotica

virus
clouded my world

disease dwelled
in my
putrid pores
a
terrible tingling
under my skin

regurgitating remnants
green and grotesque
thrown
about in my
throat

hacking hard
on this dazed day
liquid
crystal
confuse
my eyes

GREEN AND RED

David Tieman

Standing proudly on the child's rock
A prodigy.
A king.
And they scream hgh falsetto
Torches in hand.
        Flaming.
Spitting their arrows.
        Shaming.
Catapulting their pubertal anger
At the pristine
Turned obscene.

AN ARTIST

Kevin Olchawa

Black circles
of silvery onyx
stare

stealing the last
crystallized breath

the hooded shadow
promises places
only dreamed
by believing children

With proud purpose
parading passionately
they go

into nothing. . .
neither remembering. . .
        forgetting
    nor knowing. . .
        caring

With
the con artist
of life

MOSTLY FOR JULIAN

Steev Custer

Although she laid down to sleep hours ago, she is still awake, roll to side, wondering. The bed is cold without him, and so big; like walking in a dark, unfamiliar room without a clue. Several times she had forgotten, and reached out to touch him, to know the security of his presence.
That was not to be found.
She lay on her back, her eyes searching for the ceiling and her ears waiting for the sound of his breath.
Neither came.
Finally, she wrapped herself in her robe, and tip-toed down the stairs in to the even darker darkness. She was so lonely.
In the kitchen, almost to the telephone, she turned down a hallway to her right. She opened the door slowly and crept in with the silence of a veteran cat burglar. Then, she lay down on the floor of the baby's new bedroom, where she could hear him breathe, where she knew she could count on security, and where she slept for the rest of the night, until his morning cries awoke her.

SCUM LOVE

Jeff Hicks

You were never my inspiration.
In fact you depressed me
making my thoughts into nightmares
walking across my mind
as if on glass
and hoping to shatter it
along with my dreams
And if you touched me
I would try not to think of it
since your caress
was that of sandpaper
across my teeth
And your eyes
glazed over
from too much sleep
being nothing
but a stain
upon my vision
So I wish
you
and your stagnant breath
and your mildewed clothes
would get the hell away

Kiss me.

TRITE MEANDERINGS

Jonathan Wolff

Trite meanderings
thoughtless caresses
Beckonings seem by far
the best
Celery crunch of gravel
muted secrets whispers,
Anguish from the bottom
Lightning shrieks
"I missed her!"
And so,
the man awaits
Concrete emblazoned
wisps of grey
Sparkling lightless
loss of day.

IN A WAY

Kevin Olchawa

One day. . .
maybe you'll show me the way
One hour. . .
maybe I'll give you a flower

In all of my past
I have never felt
Even now. . .
. . . I am left

It saddens me
to see-
hand in hand
eye in eye

When I look to the floor
Stumble over words
Unsure
Never believing a feeling

It could have been
a thousand times-
it never was
a thousand more

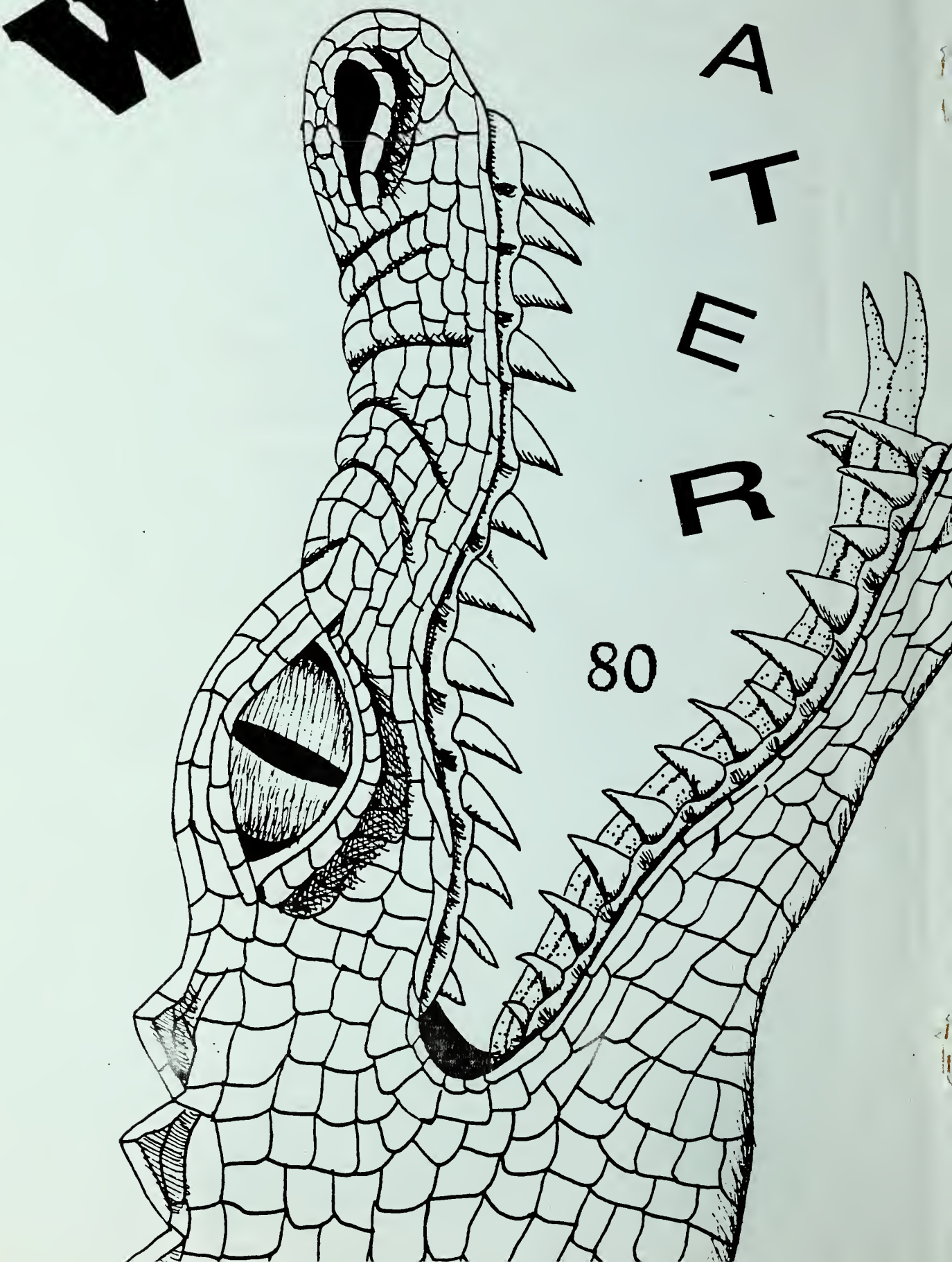
Before and now
It is just my part
in every direction
to lose my heart

TRIBE OF INSOLENCE

David Tieman

Tribe of insolence
Beating pounding wartime drums
Of rebellious pestilence
Smoking smoldering pipes of malignity
Polluting their identity
Coughing,
Grinning.

WORDEATER



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